Amendments to the Claims

1-31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus including:

a housing defining a chamber having a refuse inlet for receiving garden refuse therethrough and a discharge outlet through which shredded refuse may be discharged;

a feed hopper in communication with said refuse inlet for directing refuse through said refuse inlet into said chamber;

a rotor mounted in said chamber, said rotor including a mounting plate connected to a drive shaft or hub and adapted to rotate therewith about an axis of rotation extending through said housing, and one or more chipper blades integral with or mounted to said mounting plate for rotation therewith, said mounting plate having an opening in front of the or each chipper blade through which shredded refuse may pass, and one or more macerating means integral with or mounted to said mounting plate for rotation therewith and adapted to macerate refuse fed into said chamber wherein said drive shaft or hub extends through a wall of said housing and said mounting plate is spaced from said wall and said drive shaft or hub between said wall and said mounting plate is enclosed by a shroud and said shroud abuts and is secured to said housing at one end and terminates adjacent said mounting plate at the other end and said one or more macerating means is adapted to pass in close proximity to said shroud as said rotor rotates;

fan means in fluid communication with said chamber for creating an outflow of air through said outlet; and

drive means operatively connected to said drive shaft or hub for causing said rotor to rotate.

33. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said fan means is integral with or mounted to said mounting plate for rotation therewith.

34. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said one or more chipper blades are elongate blades which are bolted to said mounting plate and extend partially across said mounting plate towards its periphery.

35. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 34, wherein said one or more macerating means are angularly displaced from said one or more chipper blades.

36. (Cancelled).

37. (Cancelled).

38. (Cancelled).

39. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim ~~36~~32, wherein said one or more macerating means is also adapted to co-act with one or more complementary protrusions on or secured to said housing and to pass in close proximity to said one or more complementary protrusions and said shroud as said rotor rotates.

40. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 39, wherein said one or more macerating means includes a block, lug~~,~~ or blade~~, or the like~~ which is adapted to pass in close proximity to said one or more complementary protrusions and to force refuse into engagement with said complementary protrusions thereby macerating refuse adjacent said protrusions as said rotor rotates.

41. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim ~~34~~40, wherein the inner end of the or each elongate chipper blade passes in close proximity to said one or more complementary protrusions and said one or more elongate chipper blades extend to the periphery of said mounting plate.

42. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said drive means is an internal combustion engine and said drive shaft or hub is coaxial with and connected to the output shaft of said engine for rotation therewith.

43. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 42, wherein said drive shaft or hub is supported in a bearing which is mounted to a wall through which said drive shaft or hub extends and said bearing is adapted to bear axial working loads applied to said drive shaft or hub.

44. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 43, wherein said bearing is outside said chamber.

45. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 44, wherein said bearing is a self-aligning bearing having an inner race which is locked to said drive shaft or hub for rotation therewith.

46. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 44, wherein said bearing is a flange mounted bearing which is bolted to said housing by two or more bolts and the heads of said bolts form said complementary protrusions.

47. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 46, wherein said bolt heads are substantially cylindrical and have ribs or other protrusions thereon adapted to grip garden refuse as said rotor rotates.

48. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 44 including an engine mounting base operatively connected to said housing and spaced from said housing wall to provide access to said bearing, and wherein said internal combustion engine is mounted on said base.

49. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said drive means is an electric motor.

50. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 43, wherein, in use, said wall through which said drive shaft or hub extends is ~~a first~~ an upper wall of said housing and said housing includes a ~~second~~ lower wall spaced from said ~~first~~ upper wall, said ~~first~~ upper wall being operatively connected to said ~~second~~ lower wall for pivoting movement relative thereto ~~about a pivot axis~~ from a closed position in which said ~~first~~ upper and ~~second~~ lower walls together define at least in part said chamber and enclose said rotor and an open position in which said rotor is exposed to allow manual removal of refuse from said chamber.

51. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 50, wherein, ~~in use, said first wall is an upper wall and said second wall is a lower wall and~~ a set of wheels and/or skids are operatively connected to said lower wall for supporting said housing thereon.

52. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said fan means ~~is adapted to induce~~ induces air flow through said feed hopper to assist in feeding refuse through said refuse inlet.

53. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 52, wherein said housing forms an expanding outflow passage from said chamber to said discharge outlet.

54. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus as claimed in Claim 53, wherein said chamber is a volute shaped chamber.

55. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 33, wherein said fan means includes one or more fan blades mounted on the side of the mounting plate opposite to said one or more macerating means.

56. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim ~~33~~32, wherein said shredding rotor is mounted for rotation in use about a generally upright axis, said refuse inlet opens generally upwards, said feed hopper extends upwardly from said refuse inlet, said one or more macerating means extend upwardly from said mounting plate on the side proximal to said refuse inlet and said fan means extends downwardly from said mounting plate on the side distal from said refuse inlet, and wherein said drive shaft or hub extends through an upper wall of said housing, such that refuse is fed onto the same side of said mounting plate as the side on which said drive shaft is positioned.

57. (Currently amended) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said refuse inlet has a leading edge and a trailing edge adjacent said rotor and relative to its rotation

and stop means extend across said refuse inlet adjacent said trailing edge against which refuse may rest as it is chipped by said one or more chipper blades.

58. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 57, wherein said refuse inlet opens onto a portion of said mounting plate extending across at least the outermost one third of its diameter.

59. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 58, wherein each of said at least one chipper blade extends across at least the outermost one third of the diameter of said mounting plate.

60-72. (Withdrawn)

73-88. (Cancelled)

89. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said refuse inlet is a first refuse inlet and said housing includes a second refuse inlet through which branches and the like can be fed to the rotor.

90. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 89, wherein said second refuse inlet has a tubular guide or hopper in communication therewith adapted to act as a bearing surface for refuse.

91. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 90, wherein said first and second inlets are arranged such that the outer portion of the or each chipper blade passes across said second inlet while the whole of the or each chipper blade passes across said first inlet.

92. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 91, wherein said first refuse inlet extends across about between one-half and three-quarters of the rotor's radial

extent while the second inlet extends across about the outer one-quarter to one-half of the rotor's radial extent.

93. (Previously presented) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 92, wherein said first inlet extends across the outer two-thirds of the rotor's radial extent while the second inlet extends across the outer one-third of the rotor's radial extent.

94. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus including:

a housing defining a chamber having a refuse inlet for receiving garden refuse therethrough and a discharge outlet through which shredded refuse may be discharged;

a feed hopper in communication with said refuse inlet for directing refuse through said refuse inlet into said chamber;

a rotor mounted in said chamber, said rotor including a mounting plate connected to a drive shaft or hub extending through an upper wall of said housing and adapted to rotate therewith about a generally vertical axis of rotation extending through said housing, and one or more chipper blades integral with or mounted to said mounting plate for rotation therewith, said mounting plate having an opening in front of the or each chipper blade through which shredded refuse may pass, and one or more macerating means integral with or mounted to said mounting plate for rotation therewith and adapted to macerate refuse fed into said chamber, and fan means integral with or mounted to said mounting plate for creating an outflow of air through said outlet; and

drive means operatively connected to said drive shaft or hub for causing said rotor to rotate;

wherein said refuse inlet opens generally upwards from said upper wall, said feed hopper extends upwards from said refuse inlet, said one or more macerating means extends upwards from said mounting plate on the side proximal to said refuse inlet and said fan means extends downwards from said mounting plate on the side distal from said refuse inlet.

95. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 94, wherein said mounting plate is spaced from said upper wall and said drive shaft or hub between said upper wall and said mounting plate is enclosed by a shroud.

96. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 95, wherein said shroud abuts and is secured to said housing at one end and terminates adjacent said mounting plate at the other end.

97. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 96, wherein said one or more macerating means is adapted to pass in close proximity to said shroud as said rotor rotates.

98. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 97, wherein said one or more macerating means is also adapted to co-act with one or more complementary protrusions on or secured to said housing and to pass in close proximity to said one or more complementary protrusions and said shroud as said rotor rotates.

99. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 98, wherein said one or more macerating means includes a block, lug, blade, or the like which is adapted to pass in close proximity to said one or more complementary protrusions and to force refuse into engagement with said complementary protrusions thereby macerating refuse adjacent said protrusions as said rotor rotates.

100. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 94, wherein said drive means is an internal combustion engine and said drive shaft or hub is coaxial with and connected to the output shaft of said engine for rotation therewith.

101. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 100, wherein said drive shaft or hub is supported in a bearing which is mounted to said upper wall and said bearing is adapted to bear axial working loads applied to said drive shaft or hub.

102. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 101, wherein said bearing is outside said chamber.

103. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 102, wherein said bearing is a self-aligning bearing having an inner race which is locked to said drive shaft or hub for rotation therewith.

104. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 102, wherein said bearing is a flange mounted bearing which is bolted to said housing by two or more bolts and the heads of said bolts form said complementary protrusions.

105. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 104, wherein said bolt heads are substantially cylindrical and have ribs or other protrusions thereon adapted to grip garden refuse as said rotor rotates.

106. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 102 including an engine mounting base operatively connected to said housing and spaced from said housing wall to provide access to said bearing, and wherein said internal combustion engine is mounted on said base.

107. (New) Garden refuse shredding apparatus according to Claim 94, wherein said housing includes a lower wall spaced from said upper wall, said upper wall being operatively connected to said lower wall for pivoting movement relative thereto from a closed position in which said upper and lower walls together define at least in part said chamber and enclose said rotor and an open position in which said rotor is exposed to allow manual removal of refuse from said chamber.